



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

PRACTICAL GYNECOLOGY—Second Edition—Walter J. Reich, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S., and Mitchell J. Nechtow, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S., J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1957. 648 pages, 248 illustrations, 68 in color, \$12.50.

The fact that this book has appeared in a second edition would indicate a degree of popularity which scarcely seems warranted. It is aimed at the general practitioner and supposedly is to aid him in the office practice of gynecology. A statement in the section on acknowledgments at the beginning of the book implies that the text material was dictated to a wire recorder, and presumably much of it was transcribed for the printer without benefit of further editing. The proofreading was done badly, too. The legends for several illustrations are misleading, and there are numerous inconsistencies within the text.

This volume represents almost exclusively the personal opinions of the authors, and a good many of these seem to be at variance with modern gynecologic teaching and practice. Scattered through the text are many italicized warnings to do this or that, or to avoid some dreadful error at all cost, so that one is left with the impression that gynecology is a pretty scary business. Your reviewer suspects, however, that most physicians will not be unduly alarmed by these exaggerations, and will continue to look for guidance in more thoughtful treatises.

* * *

GYNCOLOGIC SURGERY AND UROLOGY—Thomas L. Ball, M.D., Assistant Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology, Cornell University Medical College. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1957. 547 pages, 161 full-page plates, \$20.00.

At first glance this large volume appears to be an atlas of surgical techniques, but in reality it is a combination of atlas and textbook. It deals with all contingencies in the female pelvis, or what the author calls the regional surgery concept, including lower tract urology and proctology, along with gynecology, and in addition certain facets of general surgery of the abdomen. In order to pursue the regional concept most fully the traditional chapter arrangement of gynecologic texts has been greatly modified. The anatomy of each region is described just ahead of the operative techniques applicable to that particular area.

The text is divided into twelve major sections, starting out with minor surgery and office procedures and ending with obstetrical problems. In between, all of the standard items are dealt with to some extent, the major consideration having been given to tumors and cysts. The surgical procedures are illustrated in 161 full-page pen and ink drawings by Daisy Stilwell. These are beautifully done, show sufficient detail without being cluttered, and are well labeled in large lettering. The steps of each operation are described in detail in numbered paragraphs printed in bold face type for easy reading, and the directions contain numerous references to the illustrative plates.

A fair portion of the book is straight text material without reference to the drawings. Several items not customarily seen

in this type of book are included, such as a discussion of the sprained back, a section on the role of the obstetrician and gynecologist in civilian defense, hormonal factors in cancer, and experimental and virus studies in cancer.

A short review cannot possibly do justice to this extensive reference work. In brief, it represents not only the opinions and practices of the author, but also to a large degree the standard accepted procedures in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, which has been one of the major teaching centers for many decades. The volume is recommended to all who associate themselves in any way with surgical procedures in the female pelvis.

* * *

A TEXTBOOK OF HISTOLOGY—Seventh Edition—Alexander A. Maximow, Late Professor of Anatomy, University of Chicago; and William Bloom, Professor of Anatomy, University of Chicago. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1957. 628 pages, 1082 illustrations, 265 in color on 631 figures, \$11.00.

There are, I suppose, not many physicians of the English speaking world who are not familiar with Maximow and Bloom's Histology. It has rightly earned for itself a place as a standard textbook and in consequence, like the swallows of Capistrano, we have come to expect the return of a revised edition. Since its inception the cycle has been with utmost regularity a new edition every four years, but in welcoming the new seventh edition we note that it is a year late. This should be, and is, a portent.

It is customary, if not very original, in reviewing a new edition of a well-known textbook, to state wherein it differs from previous editions, what new chapters or illustrations have been added, what new format has been adopted, who are new contributors and whether the new edition continues to maintain the position of the old. Although there are many changes in the new edition, let it be sufficient to say that everywhere there is evidence of careful editorial revision, the introduction of new matter and the deletion of old, and the work certainly maintains and even enhances its former position. But what is more important is that this edition shows most clearly the transition to a new era.

New techniques have increased our analytical powers in the examination of tissues enormously. The electron microscope is revolutionizing the subject to an equal if not greater degree than the compound achromatic microscope revolutionized the position established with the simple lenses of van Leeuwenhoek. To this must be added the histochemical techniques made possible by radioactive and other materials, x-ray microscopy and diffraction methods. The morphological, biophysical and biochemical are beginning to unite to provide new insight into the relationship between structure and function. Everywhere in this new edition the change is apparent. The assimilation of the new is not yet complete, but in reviewing this new edition we are most conscious of the transition to a new era in histological studies.

J. B. DEC. M. SAUNDERS, M.D.